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Seventy-second year

Provisional

8103rd meeting

Wednesday, 15 November 2017, 11 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ilnichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2017/907)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2017/907)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/907, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the latest developments in Darfur. I will provide a brief update on the situation on the ground and on the efforts of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to implement its mandate since the publication of the latest report of the Secretary-General of 27 October (S/2017/907). I will also touch upon the ongoing reconfiguration of UNAMID.

The political process aimed at reaching a settlement to the conflict through negotiations with the non-signatory parties to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur remains at an impasse. At the same time, armed clashes between the Government and those non-signatory parties have subsided, without any incidents during the reporting period. Meanwhile, the Government has begun the next stage of its disarmament campaign — the compulsory arms collection — in most parts of Darfur, for which it reportedly deployed approximately 10,000 Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to Darfur.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the process has brought to the surface tensions involving militia groups that are not part of Government forces. Confrontations between Government forces and militias were reported in Kass, South Darfur, and Kutum, North Darfur, on 21 and 23 October, respectively. On 10 November, Government forces supported by Antonov aircraft clashed with the militia group allied with Musa Hilal near Korma, North Darfur, resulting in an unconfirmed number of casualties on both sides. Government forces entered the Korma camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their search of the militias, but no one was found or arrested.

In Zalingei, Central Darfur, Government forces initiated house-to-house searches for weapons. They attempted to enter the UNICEF compound in search of weapons on 5 November, and local authorities have since been warned to avoid such incidents. In South Darfur, following demonstrations and clashes in the Kaima IDP camp, which resulted in the death of five IDPs. On 22 September, RSF in more than 100 gun-mounted and armoured vehicles blocked roads within the camp and detained one of the IDPs briefly on 2 November. Local authorities subsequently claimed that that operation was a reconnaissance mission and not part of the disarmament campaign.

Intercommunal violence also persists, particularly in connection with Arab nomadic herders, albeit with less intensity than in previous years. The number of intercommunal incidents has gradually decreased from 11 cases recorded from April to June as compared to 10 cases from June to August, and eight cases from August to October. The total number of casualties in 2017 thus far numbers 234, compared to nearly 2,000 in 2013. Nevertheless, there were two cases of intercommunal clashes in West Darfur in October. In one of the incidents, near Kulbus, on 17 October, Zaghawa and Rezeigat herders clashed over livestock, and eight Rezeigat and 15 Zaghawa were killed. In South Darfur, armed members of the Salamat tribe killed three Fallata, near Graida, on 24 October, and Fallata and Fur returnees were once again attacked by Arab nomads near Menawashei on 27 October, and five of them were killed.

In Sortony, North Darfur, tensions involving internally displaced persons, the Arab community, and the Sudan Liberation Army/Popular Defence (SLA/PD) continue. On 7 November, UNAMID prevented a group of armed Arabs allegedly looking for their livestock

from entering the IDP site. During the encounter, UNAMID observed armed SLA/PD elements assuming offensive positions in the mountains surrounding the camp. On 10 November, UNAMID once again intercepted a group of Arab nomads firing randomly in the outskirts of Sortony and claiming that their livestock had been stolen by SLA/PD elements hiding within the camp. They threatened to attack the IDP camp unless SLA/PD withdrew from the site.

It is evident that Darfur today is different from what it was like during UNAMID's initial deployment, given the overall level of improvement in terms of security. The armed groups have largely been defeated, and the ferocity of intercommunal violence has also decreased over the past year. No new large-scale displacement has taken place. However, those positive developments have not resulted in the voluntary and sustainable return of IDPs. Nearly one-third of the population in Darfur remains displaced. That reflects anxiety over security, uncertainty concerning the occupation of their land and the lack of confidence regarding their present and future prospects.

A key reason for that dilemma is the slow progress that has been made in addressing critical issues for the people of Darfur, such as land and other scarce-resource management, accountability and security sector reform. In that regard, the Government has been less than proactive in the implementation of the outstanding provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. The remaining commissions and the fund of the Doha Document remain inoperative and lack clear political guidance and funding from the Government, which is hampering efforts to address root causes.

UNAMID continues to do its utmost in the context of its fulfilling its mandate by working with local authorities and communities to promote grass-roots reconciliation and stabilization. In that context, it is equally important to augment the capacity of the United Nations country team to support longer-term peacebuilding-oriented activities. UNAMID and the country team have finalized the integrated strategic framework for 2017-2019, which sets out common priorities and the division of labour concerning three main themes: the rule of law and human rights, durable solutions, and peacebuilding for human security. The Secretariat is working with UNAMID and the country team to develop a joint financing strategy for the implementation of the framework to ensure that the drawdown of the peacekeeping mission is accompanied by adequate transitional support.

With the closure of 11 team sites and the accompanying reduction of military and police personnel, the civilian staffing structure has been reviewed and readjusted according to which the Mission budget for 2017-2018 was revised. Regarding the new two-pronged approach of UNAMID, the Mission is devising State-focused stabilization plans in cooperation with the United Nations country team, which will focus UNAMID's activities addressing the specific needs of the population in the five states. The Jebel Marra task force will become operational on 1 January, and its concept is being finalized at the moment.

In that connection, I regret to report that the allocation of land for a new team site in Golo remains pending, despite the intensive engagement with the Government in Central Darfur, Khartoum and here in New York. As Council members are aware, the establishment of a new team site in Golo for the Jebel Marra task force is an essential component underpinning the concept of the reconfiguration of UNAMID, and goes hand in hand with its withdrawal from the more stable parts of Darfur. Despite the efforts of the Sudanese Government to combat criminality, the arms collection campaign and the deployment of the Rapid Support Forces will require careful management in order to minimize security risks. A further escalation of tensions relating to disarmament could also affect the communal dynamics among the militias, their communities and other competing groups on the ground. The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur is one of the integral instruments for addressing such underlying communal tensions and issues. Its full implementation is an entry point for sustaining peace, as it touches on the causes and consequences of the decades-long conflict, including land, displacement and relationships with nomadic herders, among other things.

The level of cooperation between UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan has been positive overall, although challenges remain in terms of access restrictions and customs clearances at Port Sudan. The Government's commitment to complying with the status of forces agreement, which also applies to the allocation of land for a new team site in Golo, would be greatly appreciated. In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for its continued support for the work of UNAMID.

The President: I would like to thank Ms. Keita for her comprehensive and interesting briefing.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/907), and to take this opportunity to congratulate her on her successful work.

Uruguay emphasizes the report's message that while there have been no open clashes between Sudanese Government forces and armed groups in recent months, the security and human rights situation in Darfur is still unstable. We should also point out that the principal remaining flashpoints continue to be intercommunal clashes and hostilities, despite the reconciliation efforts by the local authorities with the support of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations country team.

My delegation believes it is critical that the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements abide by their unilateral declarations on the cessation of hostilities and move on to the next steps in the peace process, facilitated by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel with support from the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and the Joint Special Representative and Head of UNAMID. Progress in those areas would help to create the conditions needed to effectively address root causes of the conflict such as intercommunal conflicts and to safely return the more than 2 million internally displaced persons in Darfur to their homes.

We are pleased that UNAMID is moving ahead with the reconfiguration process, in accordance with the Council's decision in resolution 2363 (2017). We reiterate once again that the cooperation of the Sudanese Government with the Security Council and UNAMID is essential to the success of this transition. In that connection, I should acknowledge the Government's cooperation and support in the repatriation of uniformed units and the closure of operations bases. We call for finalizing the preparations for the establishment of a temporary operations base in Golo. We also note that the general environment in which UNAMID is operating has continued to show signs of improvement and that we have seen a drop in the crime rate and in restrictions on movement.

However, the Mission is still dealing with various logical challenges that continue to hamper its work, including delays in issuing visas, especially for human rights workers. We therefore urge the Government of the Sudan to step up its efforts to remove the remaining operational restrictions, fulfil all its obligations in that regard and maintain the positive spirit that characterized UNAMID's review process. Although the Mission is in a drawdown phase, we want to highlight the important and still necessary role that it plays in protecting civilians, for example by monitoring human rights violations, conducting daily patrols and supporting mediation in intercommunal conflicts.

In conclusion, I would like to express Uruguay's appreciation to all UNAMID personnel, the United Nations country team in the Sudan and the humanitarian workers who work tirelessly and often in difficult conditions to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (S/2017/907) and for the progress that has been made in implementing the recommendations established in the wake of the latest strategic review of UNAMID.

We want to highlight some of the positive aspects mentioned in the report, which we see as the result of the joint efforts of the African Union, the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations. In the first place, the fact that there were no clashes between the Sudanese Government and rebel groups in Darfur during this period is a major improvement, enabling the parties to focus their efforts on the political process, address the root causes of the conflict and promote development and peacebuilding in Darfur.

We appreciate the Government's efforts to promote the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. As we have frequently said, the only possible solution to the situation in Darfur is through a political process that can enable the parties to resolve their pending issues, especially disputes about land ownership and management, intercommunal conflicts, disarming the civilian population and the militia, and a permanent ceasefire. We must settle the differences regarding the Document and we call on the non-signatory parties to engage in constructive dialogue with the Government.

In that regard, we commend the initiatives taken by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, the Chairperson of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel tasked with implementing the recommendations for the Sudan and South Sudan, and Mr. Jeremiah Mamabolo, the Joint Special Representative for Darfur, together with all the staff of UNAMID and Mr. Nicholas Haysom, the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan.

Secondly, we would like to underscore the improvements in the operating environment and the decrease in obstructions to the free movement of UNAMID and humanitarian personnel, as well as in crime. There have been no obstructions of aerial movements, humanitarian activities have not been significantly restricted, and in Jebel Marra progress has even been made in obtaining visas and authorizing the passage of cargoes from Port Sudan, as well as preparations for establishing an operations base in Golo. That is all significant progress. While some problems will still have to be addressed, there have been clear improvements. We encourage the Government to continue its cooperation with UNAMID in accordance with the status of forces agreement.

Thirdly, the relative stability in the humanitarian situation and the fact that no major displacements have been reported in Darfur is a good sign. However, the spread of disease and the effects of flooding are worrying. We support the efforts of the World Health Organization, UNICEF and humanitarian workers to contain the situation and urge them to cooperate and facilitate their work so as to help those affected as effectively as possible. We must also continue our efforts to improve the humanitarian situation for the internally displaced. Although the cases of abuse, human rights violations and other crimes have decreased compared with the previous period, we must redouble our efforts to put a stop to cases of illegal detention and violence against women and girls, particularly sexual and gender-based violence, and promote access to justice for women.

It is clear that one of the major current challenges ahead lies in reducing tensions surrounding the weapons collection, demobilization and reintegration promoted by the Government. We believe that the success of these processes is necessary to ensure lasting peace and that we must avoid any possible division while encouraging the engagement of the civilian population and militia with this process. This governmental campaign, which is in line with the peacebuilding process led by the United Nations, needs the support of the international community.

Today, the Sudan requires the joint work of the African Union, the United Nations and the international community in general in order to pursue its development and peacebuilding efforts in Darfur. It is critical to ensure State authority over its entire territory; that the rule of law is established; that institutions, the police and justice are strengthened; and that processes of reconciliation and development projects are promoted. Regarding the latter, we welcome the measures being taken to address the difficult economic situation in Darfur, such as the lifting of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on the Sudan. We also believe that the time has come for the sanctions imposed by the Security Council to be lifted.

In closing, we commend the progress made in reconfiguring UNAMID. We must strengthen the capacities of the United Nations country team so as to ensure the successful withdrawal of the hybrid operation. This must be a joint effort of the Government and interested parties, together with the United Nations. We thank UNAMID for its dedication and efforts in seeking to restore peace in Darfur.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report submitted on his behalf to the Council (S/2017/907). I would also like to thank the Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for his report. I further thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, and express our great appreciation for the briefing she has just delivered. We welcome her as a messenger for peace to New York, as she was a messenger for peace in Darfur before assuming her new position here.

It is probably appropriate to mention the fact that the 2011 Doha agreement is an international agreement concluded under the auspices of the United Nations, the African Union and the League of Arab States. However, up until June, the agreement — in our view and in general — has been partially flouted by the Council. Nevertheless, through our rather limited national resources, we have continued to implement the agreement with the support of a few countries, particularly the State of Qatar. Today, and as in all similar instances when a peace agreement is achieved — for

example, as was the case in Colombia recently — we believe that the United Nations should take a collective stand for peace and leverage all of its weight to advance the peacebuilding stage in Darfur, specifically in terms of the need for humanitarian assistance.

In that regard, we believe that resolution 2363 (2017) is appropriate. It calls for the onset of the gradual drawdown and reconfiguration of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), paving the way for the situation in Darfur to advance to a new stage of peacebuilding and the consolidation of stability, security and peace in all states of Darfur, except for a pocket of land that is rather limited in terms of surface area, located in Jebel Marra. Jebel Marra, as the Council is aware, is a region of Central Darfur state, which is one of the five states that constitute greater Darfur. The resolution further echoes the ongoing calls of the Sudanese Government since 2015 with respect to the need to take into account and adapt to the major changes that Darfur has experienced and that have transformed the dynamics of the conflict.

Today the fighting has stopped between the Government and armed groups, which have become active outside the country. Furthermore, the steady implementation of the provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and of significant measures adopted to resolve the conflict has enabled the Sudanese Government and its partners to pursue projects that address the root causes of the conflict and, at the same time, to tackle phenomena arising from this conflict, such as displacement and the circulation of weapons, through development projects and the delivery of services. We are fully aware of the challenges plaguing this phase, and we urge the Council to continue its collaboration in order to enable us to tackle these challenges together. We would also point to the important measures adopted by the Sudanese Government, including the arms collection campaign.

If I may, I should like to clarify a few points.

First, the Government of the Sudan, in dealing with the phenomena arising from the conflict, has announced a campaign to collect arms voluntarily from the hands of citizens, under the supervision of the First Vice-President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, who have conducted the campaign with the relevant parties at the state and federal levels. The campaign is beginning to bear fruit. The first stage has been concluded to the letter of the announced plan. All reports point to the fact that it has enjoyed deal success. The second stage will be launched shortly to implement the law on weapons and munitions so as to limit their possession to the regular armed forces and those with permits from the competent authorities. All those who breach this law will be stripped of their arms and brought to justice.

Before the Council, we hereby announce that the Government of the Sudan is determined to continue implementing this plan and its provisions in order to ensure that the law prevails over those who violate it, regardless of any other consideration. UNAMID plays an important role in assisting the Government in the arms collection campaign and in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. This constitutes a fundamental priority in the current stage and an important aspect of the UNAMID mandate.

With regard to the unverified, albeit insignificant, information echoed in the report, we would like to draw the Council's attention to a point raised in the past by the former Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, to the effect that it is high time for the United Nations to rely on its own information rather than on information from other sources. The same remarks were echoed by the former Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, and are currently underscored by Secretary-General Guterres.

We commend the measures adopted by UNAMID to date within the framework of the implementation of the recommendations of resolution 2363 (2017). Pursuant to that resolution, UNAMID has closed 11 sites as a first step, and we trust that this action will continue in order to implement the second stage of its drawdown and reconfiguration plan, which was adopted by the Council in June in order to pave the way for the further drawdown of UNAMID forces and their ultimate withdrawal from the Sudan as soon as possible.

I would like to reaffirm the Government's long-standing position in favour of enabling UNAMID to fully implement its mandate. Previous reports and the current report have attested to this cooperation in all areas, particularly with regard to the customs clearance of containers and the issuance of visas and access and movement permits for the Mission and the humanitarian partners, as well the response to UNAMID's request to open a temporary operational base in the Golo region, for which the procedures are being conducted in a proper manner.

Fifteen years have passed since some outlaws from the remnants of armed groups took up arms and persistently refused throughout all these years to take part in any national, regional or United Nations initiatives for peace. Today, as we approach 2018, the only thing left for them to do is spread false and misleading information. We are confident that the Secretariat will not attribute much importance to such allegations and that it will fully verify any information prior to endorsing it, as required by the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Council members may rest assured that the Government of the Sudan is doing everything it can to achieve lasting peace and stability in Darfur. In several areas, the Government is striving to deal with the phenomena that have arisen from the conflict. For example, the Sudanese Government has set up development plans and programmes that would lift Darfur from the cycle of poverty into productivity and self-sufficiency.

The nature of the conflict in Darfur has shifted and there have been no clashes with armed groups for almost two years. We are entering a new phase in which the State will be able to enjoy absolute sovereignty through its different manifestations. Therefore, logically and politically, it is necessary to revisit the sanctions that were imposed 12 years ago when resolution 1591 (2005) was adopted in 2005. There is no doubt that this step would constitute a recognition of the reality of the current situation, as we have previously stated. We are awaiting a positive response and are certainly open to ideas and proposals from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The humanitarian situation remains a key priority for the Government of the Sudan. In spite of an increase in the number of displaced persons voluntarily returning to their villages, the continuing presence of refugee camps in Darfur is no longer justified following the restoration of peace, stability and security, especially given that the peace partners in Darfur have made considerable efforts to prepare and equip villages, thereby ensuring better conditions for people to voluntarily return by providing basic services. Local and international efforts must continue in order to encourage displaced persons to return voluntarily, and we have developed a plan to address the situation based on three options that could produce effective solutions to this phenomenon.

In conclusion, we commend the tireless efforts being made to conclude the peace process. We once again welcome this step towards peace, which is synonymous with development and will certainly help us to end the conflict. My country's delegation would like to thank UNAMID for its efforts in all areas, as well as the peacekeepers for their sacrifices over the years. We also thank the troop- and police-contributing countries and stand ready to cooperate with all regional and international partners until all UNAMID personnel are withdrawn from the Sudan, following the full and successful completion of their mandate.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.